# Web Searching

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## Searching the World Wide Web

**Recommended search engine:**  
**URL:** [http://www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

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**Commands:**

| |  
|---|---|---|
| **+** | **–** | **" "** |
| Put a plus sign in front of every term you require. This command tells Google that the term **must** appear in every web page returned. | Put a minus sign in front of every term you want to exclude. This command tells Google that the term **must not** appear in any web page returned. | Put words that are a phrase in quotation marks. This command tells Google that the terms within the quotation marks are a phrase and **must appear next** to each other in every web page returned. You can then put a + or – sign in front of the phrase. |
| **inurl:.edu,.org,.gov** |  |  |
| Restrict your results to a specific domain. This command tells Google that all web pages returned **must be from the domain(s) listed** after this command. |  |  |

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**Recommended search engine:** You may see results tagged as Full-text @ Hofstra. See the explanation below.  
**URL:** [http://scholar.google.com/](http://scholar.google.com/)

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### How Google Scholar identifies Hofstra materials

When you search Google Scholar, you may notice links alerting you that the full text is available at the Hofstra Library. Google has been able to identify Hofstra resources through the OpenURL Gateway. The OpenURL Gateway is a standard used to link information sources on the web to registered libraries. We are a registered library and therefore, appear in Google Scholar results.
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WEB SITES

♦ Accuracy
✓ Did the information come from a reliable source? How would you verify the information presented? Are there references/citations that can be checked to verify the accuracy of the information? a bibliography?
✓ Is the information consistent with other sources you’ve read on the topic?
✓ Are there editors and fact-checkers for the source? Is contact information provided for them?

♦ Authority/Credibility
✓ Who is the author/producer of the information?
✓ Is any information offered about the author/producer/sponsor in the form of an “About,” page or FAQ?
✓ Is the producer a scholarly organization or association? An educational institution? Government agency?
✓ What are the credentials or background of the author/producer of the information?
✓ Is the relationship between the sponsor/host for the page and the author/producer clear? What is the nature of the relationship?
✓ How does the nature/mission/reputation of the sponsor and author impact the credibility of the information?

♦ Objectivity
✓ Does the author present the information as fact, opinion/conjecture or scholarly research? If the later, is the research methodology clear and appropriate to subject field? Are there citations?
✓ Is equal time given to varying viewpoints on the topic?
✓ To what extent is the information presented to sway the opinion of the audience?
✓ If a particular group sponsors the resource, does the organization have a particular “agenda”?
✓ Is there any advertising on the page?
✓ What is the domain of the website? These are the popular domains and some general rules you can apply to them.
  - .net = personal website; objectivity very suspect; sources of information are rarely if ever cited
  - .com = commercial enterprise/for profit; objectivity may be suspect; motivation to publish information is to make profit; sources of information are rarely if ever cited
  - .org = non-profit organization; objectivity may be suspect; bias favors the cause being promoted, however responsibility and accountability for information provided is higher; sources of information provided are usually cited
  - .edu = educational institution; objectivity may be suspect; bias favors the current dominant theory and practices in the field; responsibility, accountability, credibility, authority higher for information provided as institutional and individual reputations are at stake; sources of information are almost always cited
  - .gov = government agencies; objectivity may be suspect; bias favors the agenda of the current administration; responsibility, accountability, credibility, authority higher for information provided as institutional and individual reputations are at stake; sources of information are almost always cited; in most cases, these websites are the definitive source for the information provided

♦ Timeliness
✓ Is the information regularly updated? Is there a date listed of the last update?
✓ Is the information too old to be useful or too current to be credible/supportable?

♦ Coverage
✓ Is the information complete or abridged? If abridged, who is the editor(s)?

♦ Relevance/Appropriateness
✓ For what audience has this information been written? General? Academic? Professional?
✓ Does this information meet your research needs?